

We Beg You, Church-Member, Pray For Your Elders!

The Christian has no more powerful weapon that is constantly available to him than the glorious privilege of prayer. Intercessory prayer proves to be the greatest -- and at the same time, the hardest -- blessing that Christians have for one another! We can and must minister biblical truth to each other. Yes we must encourage. And sure we must reprove and confront when needed. But how frequently do we read of Paul begging believers: "pray for us" (1 Thess 5:25; 2 Thess 3:1; cf. Heb 13:18). Faithful shepherds would resonate with this simple plea to every church-member, "Brethren: pray for us!" How, you ask? Pray for your elders in the following suggested ways.

Know The Lord!

Pray for your elders to *know the Lord*. Simply: more than anything else in the world, pray that they would know God -- *deeply*. Pray that God would enlarge their understanding, deepen their convictions, widen their grasp, and tighten their adherence to God's glory and character. Pray for your shepherds to *know God* in such a way that they experientially *long* to be *with God* in communion. Pray that their service is not rote or heartless. But pray that their ministerial work flows from a warm heart of devotion to Christ that all springs from a deep, tender, ever-growing knowledge of God!

Know the Word!

Pray for your elders to *know the Word*. Our guidebook is Scripture. Our foundation upon which we build *all* of life and ministry is the sufficient and clear Word of God. Nothing is as fixed as God's Word. Nothing is as unchangeable as His Truth. In an age of opposition to divine authority and in a world drowning in rebellion against God's clear directives, your elders covet and need your intercessory prayer. Pray for their courage to stand upon Scripture in the face of any and all opposition. Pray for their theological precision and robust grip of the biblical gospel so that Satan does not sway them away from the priorities. Pray for them to know and feed on the Word!

Know the Flock!

Pray for your elders to *know the flock*. Remember what Solomon charged his son: know well the condition of your flocks (Prov 27:23). Your elders have much to do including prayer, study of the Word, and administrative details. But remember: pastoral work is *shepherding* work. Ministerial work is *people* work. Pastors engage in *soul-care*. Pray for daily strength, divine power, sustaining energy, grace-given endurance, and joy-filled hearts. Intercede often for your ministers as their work often goes unnoticed, and at times, unappreciated. Pray for the Lord to minister to *their* hearts as they minister to the hearts of the saints. Pray for God to guard them from 'pastoral burnout' and from overworking to the neglect of their primary ministry -- his own wife and children. Pray that they would know needs, attend to them, and balance his time and duties well.

Know the Danger!

Pray for your elders to *know the danger*. Dangerous times are those in which we live! The god of this world is plunging many with him to perdition! And how he loves to distract the saints, distort the gospel, defile the leaders, destroy the gospel's reputation and disrupt godly fellowship. Pray frequently and fervently for God to protect your congregation! Pray for your

leaders in this! Pray that they would know and see the danger as a *watchman* of old was to observe a danger on the horizon and cry out to *prevent* harm from striking. Pray that God's leaders would have insight and discernment to protect the flock preventatively instead of reactively after the danger has pierced through. Pray much and often for this is vital to the church's health!

Know the Power!

Pray for your elders to *know the power*. Any faithful shepherd would honestly affirm his own weakness and inadequacy *in himself* to do pastoral work. So pray for him and with him to have and know the power of God! Consider calling your pastor and praying *with and for him* to have the power of God in his prayer time, in his sermon preparation time, in his preaching, and in his pastoral work. Pray for him to know the power of God and to see glimpses of God's grace revealed as he marvels at how God works *in and through him* for the advance of the gospel and for the fame of Christ's Name! Pray for him to experience the power of God while he heralds the gospel. Pray for him to see converts as he evangelizes and calls sinners to repent and believe. Pray for him to know power in the counseling room as he seeks to help believers put off sin and put on holiness. Pray for him and with him to have divine power in his work!

Know the Joy!

Pray for your elders to *know the joy*. Fullness of joy, the happinesses of joy, the delightfulness of joy and the otherworldliness of joy! Yes, pray for your shepherd-elders to have the divine glory of joy strike deep in their souls. Pray that even when hospital visits are needed, when struggling saints need reproof, when bad doctrine must be confronted, and when busyness creeps in that the joy of the Lord would refresh them, sustain them, gladden them, and enlarge their hearts. Pray for these shepherds to drink of the river of God's delights -- *daily*. Pray for your elders to do their work not out of sheer duty but out of joyful wonder at God's grace and call and glory! Pray for the joy of your elders to permeate through the flock so that Christian joy would characterize your local church congregation. Pray much and often for the God of joy to grant joy to your leaders!